

THE
REDEMPTION
OF
TIME
OR,

A SERMON containing
very good Remedies for
them that have mis-spent their
time: shewing how they should
redeem it comfortably.

By Wm. T. D. O.

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and Minister of *Barbury in Oxfordshire.*

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*Psalm 90. 12. Lord teach us to number our daies,
that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.*

L O N D O N,
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16-221



THE PREFACE.

THE usual vice of humane nature, to be weary of good things, when they grow old and common, and to call for novelties, is especially discernable in mens esteem and use of Books. Abundance of old ones are left neglected to the worms and dust, whilest new ones of far less worth are most of the Book-sellers trade and gain. It is not easie to give a reason of it, but it is not to be denied, that this age hath few such Writers as the last, either controversial or Practical. Even among the Papists, there are now few such as *Salarez, Vasquez, Valentia, Victoria, Penottus, Ruiz, Alvarez, Bellarmine, &c.* And among us, too few such as *Jewel, Whitaker, Reynolds, Field, Isler, White, Challoner, Chillingworth, &c.* which the Papists understanding, would fain have the monuments of these worthies forgotten, and are calling for new answers to the schisms.

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that have been so long agoe confuted; to keep those old unanswerable writings, from the peoples hands. And thus doth the envious enemy of holiness, by the Practical writings of those holy men who are now with God. The solid, grave, and pious labours of Rich, Rogers, Perkins, Greenham, Diering, Dent, Smith, Dod, Hilderham, Downame, Sam. Ward, Hall, Bolton, Dike, Stoke, Elton, Tailor, Harris, Preston, Sibs, Ball and many more such, are by the most neglected, as if we were quite above their parts; But it were well if more injudicious or undigested writings possessed not their room. Though I may hereby censure my self as much as others, I must needs say, that the reprinting of many of our Fathers writings, might have saved the labour of writing many later Books, to the greater commodity of the Church.

Among the rest, I well remember that even in my youth (and since much more) the writings of Mr. *Whateley* were very savoury to me: especially his *New-Birth*, his *Cave-cloth*, and his *Sermon of Redeeming Time*. And finding this last now hardly to be got, when yet the necessity of it is increased, and knowing of no other, that hath done that work so well, I have desired the Printer to vindicate it from oblivion, and benefit the world with the reviving of so profitable (though small) a Treatise.

I must

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I must so far venture on the displeasure of the guilty, as to say, that the doleful condition of two sorts of persons, the SENSUAL GENTRY, and the idle Beggars, is it that hath compelled me to this service: but especially of the former sort, who though slothful, may possibly be drawn to read so small a Book: What man that believeth a life hereafter, and considereth the importance of our business upon earth, and observeth how most persons, but especially our *sensual Gentry*, live, can chuse but wonder that ever Reason can be so far lost, and even *self-love* and the care of their own everlasting state, so laid asleep, as mens great contempt of Time declareth! Ladies and Gentlewomen, it is you whom I most deeply pity and lament: Think not that I am too bold with you: God, who employeth us on such service, will be bolder with you than this comes to. And Christ was bold with such as you, when he spake the Histories or Parables of the two Rich men in *Luke 12.* and *Luke 16.* And when he told men how hardly the Rich should enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. And *James* was bold with such when he wrote, Chap. 5. Go too now, ye Rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you: Your Riches are corrupted, and your garments Mould-eaten: Your gold and silver is cankered, and the rust of them shall be a witness against you.

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and shall eat your flesh as it were fire, &c.
— Ye have lived in pleasure on earth, and been wanton : Ye have nourished your hearts as in a day of slaughter. — And he was neither ignoble nor unlearned, but of Honourable birth, and the Orator of an University, who was so bold with the English Gentry (when they say, they were much wiser and better than they are now) as to bespeak them thus — (*Herbert's Church-porch.*)

“ Fly Idleness ; which yet thou canst not flye.
“ By dressing, mistressing, and complement :
“ If those take up the day, the Sun will cry
“ Against thee ; for his light was only lent :
“ God gave thy soul brave wings ; put not
those feathers
“ Into a bed to sleep out all ill weathers.

“ O *England* ! full of sin, but most of sloth !
“ Spit out thy phlegm, and fill thy breast with
glory !
“ Thy Gentry bleats, as if thy native cloth,
“ Transus'd a sheepishness into thy story.
“ Not that they all are so, but that the
most,
“ Are gone to grass, and in the pasture
lost.

“ This

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" This loss springs chiefly from our education,

" Some till their ground, but let weeds choake
their son :

" Some mark a Partridge ; never their child
fashion :

" Some ship them over, and the thing is done.

" Study this art : make it thy great design :

" And if Gods Image move thee not, let
thine.

" Some great estates provide ; but do not
breed

" A mast'ring mind ; so both are lost thereby

" Or else they breed them tender ; make
them need

" All that they leave : this is flat poverty.

" For he that needs five hundred pounds to
live,

" Is full as poor as he that needs but five.

When I peruse the map of *Sodom* in *Ezek.*
16 49, 50. methinks I am in an infected
City , where instead of [**LCRD HAVE
MERCY ON US**] is written on the **GEN-
TRY's** doors [**PRIDE, FULNESS OF
BREAD, ABUNDANCE OF IDLENESS,
UNMERCIFULNESS AND ABOMINA-
TION.**] *B*ehold this was the iniquity of thy
sister *Sodom*, pride, fulness of bread, and
abundance of idleness was in her, and in her
daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand

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of the poor and needy : and they were brought
and committed abomination before me] The
title over the leaves of these verses might be
[THE CHARACTER OF THE SENSU-
AL GENTRY.]

Mistake me not, I am so far from accusing
all the Rich and Honourable, that I must
say it is as a testimony against the rest, that
I know many such who spend their Time as
fruitfully and diligently as the poor (though
in another sort of service :) And such might
the rest have been if their *Bodies* had not got
the mastery of their *Souls*. It is not your
FRIDE or FULLNESS of BREAD that I am
now to speak of, but your IDLENESS. Ma-
ny of the old Philosophers thought that when
sickness or age had made one unserviceable
to the Common-wealth, it was a shame to
live, and a duty to make away themselves ;
as bring but unprofitable burdens to the
world. Christians are not of their mind, be-
cause it is a mercy even under pain to have
time of preparation for another world, and
because we may serve God in *Patience* and
Heavenly desires and *Hope*, when we cannot
serve him by an active life : But Christians
and Heathens will proclaim those persons, to
be the shame of Nature, who wilfully make
themselves unprofitable, and live in their
heath as if they were disabled by sickness ;
and are condemned by their *sensuality* to a
prison

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prison, or a grave : so that their Epitaph may be written on their doors , **HERE LYETH SUCH A ONE** , rather than it can be said that *Here he liveth*. O what a rock is a hardened heart ! How can you chuse but tremble when you think how you spend your daies ? and how all this time must be accounted for ? That those that have a death and judgement to prepare for, a Heaven to get, a Hell to scape , and souls to save , can waste the day in *careless idleness* , as if they had no business in the world , and yet their consciences never tell them what they do , and how all this must be reviewed ?

Compare together the life of a *Christian* , and of a *fleshly brut* , and you will see the difference. Suppose then both Ladies and Gentlewomen of the same rank : The one riseth as early as is consistent with her health ; with thoughts of thankfulness and love , her heart is so awaketh , and rise h up to him that night and day preserveth her : she quickly dispatcheth the dressing of her body , as intending no more but serviceable warmth , and modest decency : and then she betaketh herself to her closet , where she poureth out her soul in confession , supplication , thanksgiving and praise to God, her Creator , Redeemer and Sanctifier : And as one that delighteth in the Law of the Lord, she reverently openeth the sacred Scriptures, and readeth over some

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part of it, with some approved Commentary at hand, in which she may see the sense of that, which of her self she could not understand: What is plain, she taketh in, digesteth, and layeth up for practice: And that which is too hard for her, as a humble learner she waiteth in patience, till by her Teachers help in time she can come to understand it. As she hath leisure, she readeth such holy Books, as interpret and apply the Scriptures, to inlighten her mind, and resolve her will, and quicken her affections, and direct her practice. And as she liveth in an outward Calling or course of Labour, in which her *Body*, as well as her *Mind*, may have employment, she next addresseth her self to that; she looketh with prudence and carefulness to her family! she taketh care of her servants labours, and their manners: Neither suffering any to live in idleness, nor yet so over-labouring them, as to deny them some time to read the Scriptures, and call upon God, and mind their souls: She endureth no prophane despisers of Piety, or vicious persons in her house: She taketh fit seasons to speak to her servants such sober words of holy counsel, as tend to instruct and save their souls: She causeth them to learn the principles of Religion in some Catechism, and to read such good Books as are most suitable to their capacity. In her affairs, she avoideth

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avoideth both sordid parsimony, and wastful prodigality; and is thrifty and sparing, not in covetousness, but that she may do the more good to them that want: She indulgeth no excess or riotousness in her house, though the vices of the times should make it seem needful to her honour. If she want recreation, or have leisure for more work, she steps out to her poor Tenants and neighbours houses, and seeth how they live, and what they want, and speaketh to them some sober words of counsel about the state of their immortal souls, and stirreth them up to a holy life: She causeth the souls of the poor to bless her, and is an example of piety to all about her. But her special care and labour is in the education of her children (if she have any:) She watcheth over them, lest the company, and example, and language of ungodly persons should infect them: She causeth them to read the Scriptures, and other holy Books, and to learn the principles of Religion, and teacheth them how to call upon God, and give him thanks for all his mercies: She acquainteth them with the sins of their depraved natures, and laboureth to humble them in the sense thereof: She openeth to them the Doctrine of mans salvation by Christ, and the necessity of a new birth, and of a heavenly nature: She disgraceh all sin to them, especially the radical master-sins

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lias, even ignorance, unbelief, selfishness, pride, sensuality and voluptuousness, the love of this world, and unholiness of heart and life: She sweetly and seriously insinuateth into them the love and liking of faith and holiness; and frequently enlargeth her speech to them of the Greatness, Wisdom, and Goodness of God, and what he is to man, and how absolutely we owe him all the service, obedience and love, that our faculties can possibly perform: She sweeteneth their thoughts of God and Godliness, by telling them what God hath done for man, and what he will be to his own for ever: and by acquainting them with the reasons of a holy life, and the folly of ungodly men, and what a brutish thing it is to be sensual, and to pamper and please this flesh, which must shortly turn to dust, and to neglect a soul which must live for ever. She remembreth them oft that they must die, and telleth them how great a change death makes, and how the change of Regeneration must prepare us for it: She openeth to them the blessedness of holy souls, that shall be for ever with the Lord, and the misery of the damned, who cast away themselves, by the wilful neglect of the time of their visitation. In a word, it is her daily care and calling, to prepare her children for the service of God, and to be blessings to the world in their generation, and to be happy themselves

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themselves for evermore : and to destroy and prevent that sin and wickedness, which would make them a plague and curse in their generation. Her meals are not luxurious nor long, nor her feastings unnecessary, to the wasting of estate, or precious time ; but seasonable, frugal, charitable and pious, intended to promote some greater good. She keepeth up the constant performance of religious duties in her family ; not mocking God with formal complement ; but worshipping him in reverence and serious devotion, reading the holy Scriptures, and seriously calling upon God, and singing to him Psalms of praise. If her mind need recreation, she hath some profitable history, or other fruitful books to read, and variety of good works, and a seasonable diversion to the affairs of her family, instead of Cards and Dice, and the abused fooleries of the sensual world : When she is alone, her thoughts are fruitful to her self ; either examining her heart and life, or looking seriously into eternity, or rejoicing her soul in the remembrance of Gods mercies, or in the foresight of endless blessedness with him, or in stirring up some of his graces in her soul. When she is with others, her words are savoury, sober, seasonable ; as the oracles of God for piety and truth, tending to edification ; and to administer instruction and grace to the hearers, and

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and rebuking the idle talk, or filthy scurrility or backbiting of any that would corrupt the company and discourse. At evening she again returneth to the more solemn worshipping of God, and goeth to rest, as one that still waiteth when she is called to rest with Christ, and is never totally unready for that call. Thus doth she spend her daies, and accordingly doth she end them, being conveyed by Angels into the presence of her Lord, and leaving a precious memorial to the living, the poor lamenting the loss of her charity, and all about lamenting the removal of a pattern of piety and righteousness, and loving holiness the better, for the perfume of such a heavenly and amiable example.

On the other side, how different is the life of the sensual Ladies and Gentlewomen to whom I am now writing. When they have indulged their sloth in unnecessary sleep, till the precious morning hours are past, they arise with thoughts as fruitless as their dreams: Their talk and time, till almost half the day is gone, is taken up only about their childish trifling ornaments: so long are they dressing themselves, that by that time they can but say over, or joyn in a few formal words, which go for prayer, it is dinner time (for an Image of Religion some of them must have, lest conscience should torment them before

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before the time.) And when they ~~have~~ late out an hour or two at dinner, in gratifying their appetites, and in idle talk, they must spend the next hour in talk, which is as idle : A savoury word of the life to come, must not trouble them, nor interrupt their flesh'y converse : Perhaps they must next go to Cards or Dice, and it may be to a Play house, or at least, on some unprofitable visitation, or some worthless visitors that come to them, must take up the rest of the afternoon, in frothy talk, which all set together comes to nothing, but vanisheth as smoke : And they chuse such company, and such a course of life, as shall make all this seem unavoidable and unnecessary, and that it would run them into contempt and great inconveniences if they did otherwise. If they look after their affairs, it is meerly through covetousness : But more usually they leave that care to others, that they may do nothing that is good for soul or body : They use their servants, as they do their beasts, for their service only ; and converse with them as if they had no souls to save or lose : They teach them by their example to speak vainly, and live sensually, and to forget the life to come : Their children they love but as the bruits do their young : They teach them how to bow and dance, and carry themselves decently in the sight of men ; but never labour to heal their

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their souls of ignorance, unbelief and pride ; nor open to them the matters of everlasting consequence : But rather perswade them that serious holiness is but hypocrisie , and the obedience of Gods Laws is a needless thing. They teach them by their example to curse , and swear, and lye, and rail, and to deride Religion , or at least, to neglect God, and life eternal, and mind only the transitory vanities of this life : They leave them to Satan, to wicked company and counsel , and to their fleshly lusts and pride, and when they have done , take care only to get them sufficient maintenance ; to feed this sensual fire while they live : They train them up for the service of sin and Satan, that at age they may have Ignorance and Vice sufficient to make them the plagues and misery of their Country, and to engage them in enmity against that Gospel and Ministry which is against their lusts ; that rebelling against Christ, they may have at last the reward of Rebels , instead of salvation. In a word , they do more against their poor childrens souls, than all their enemies in the world ; if not more than the Devil himself could do, at least, they most effectually serve him , for their childrens damnation. Thus do they spend their daies , and at night conclude them as carelessly as they begun them : And at death (without a true conversion) shall end them as miserably as they spent them sinfully :

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sinfully: And while they are pampering their flesh, and saying, *I have enough, I will eat, drink and be merry*, they suddainly hear, *Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required, and then whose shall all this be which thou possessest*, Luke 12. 19, 20. And when they have a while been clothed in Purple and Silks, and fared sumptuously every day, they must hear at last, *Remember that thou in thy life time receivdest thy good things, and Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And when the Time which they now despise is gone, O what would they give for one other year or hour of such time, to do the work which they now neglected*, Luk. 16. 24, 25, 26. Matth. 25. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12.

Is there not a great difference now between these two sorts of persons, in the expence of Time. And is it any wonder if there be a difference in their rewards. In Matth. 25. 30. It is not on'y [cast the whoremonger, the drunkard, the perjured, the persecutor] but [cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.]

Compare, I beseech you, the Time which you spend, 1. In idleness. 2. In excessive sleep. 3. In adorning you. 4. In feasting and long meals. 5. In curiosity and pomp, employing most of your servants time in impertinences, as well as your own. 6 In excessive

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excessive worldly cares. 7. In vain company and idle talk. 8. In vain thoughts. 9. In sensual recreations, in cards, dice, huntings, hawkings, playes, Romances, fruitless books, &c. I say compare this Time, with the Time which you spend in examining your hearts and lives, and trying your title to eternal life, in bewailing sin, and begging mercy of God, and returning thanks and praise to your great Benefactor, in instructing your children and servants, in visiting the sick, relieving the poor, exhorting one another, in meditating on Eternity and the way thereto, in learning the word and will of God, and in the sanctified labours of your outward calling; and let your consciences tell you, which of these hath the larger share? And whether those things which should have none, and those which should have little, have not almost all? And whether God have not only the leavings of your flesh?

Gentlemen and Ladies, I envy not your pleasures: I have my self a body with its proper appetites, which would be gratified, as well as you? And I have not wanted opportunity to gratifie it. If I thought that this were the most manly life, and agreeable to reason, and that we had no greater things to mind, I could thus play away my Time as you do. But it amazeth me to see the worlds stupidity that people who are posting away

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unto Eternity, and have so much to do in a little time, and of such unconceivable importance, can yet waste their dayes in sleeping, and dressing, and feasting, and comp'ementing; in pastime and playes, and idle talk, as if they were all but a dream, and their wits were not so far awakened as to know what it is to be a M A N. And to increase our pity, when they have done they ask, [What harm is there in cards and dice, in stage-playes and Romances? Is it not lawful to use such and such recreations?] suppose they were all unquestionably lawful, Have you no greater matter that while to do? Have you no more useful Recreations? that will exercise your *bodies* and *minds* more profitably, or at least with less expence of Time? To a *sedentary* person, Recreation must be such as stirs the Body: To a *Labouring* person, variety of good books and pious exercises is a fitter recreation than cards and dice. Is your Recreation but as the Mowers whetting of his sythe? no *often*, nor no *longer* than is necessary to fit you for those Labours and duties, which must be the great and daily business of your lives? If this be so, I am not reprehending you; But I beseech you consider, Have you not souls to regard as well as others? Have you not a God to serve? and his word and will to learn and do? Have you not servants and children to instruct and educate

(And

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(And O what a deal of labour doth their ignorance and obstinacy require ? Have you not death and judgement to prepare for ? Have you not an outward calling to follow ? (Though I say not that you must do the same labours as the poor, I say that you *must labour* and be profitable to the Commonwealth) Have you not many good works of Charity to do ? And will you leave the most of this undone, and waste your time in playes, and cards, and feasts, and idleness, and then say [*what harm is in all this ? and are they not lawful ?*] O that the Lord would open your eyes, and shew you where you must be ere long, and tell you what work you have here to do, that must be done, or you are lost for ever ; and then you would easily tell your selves, whether playing and fooling away precious Time be lawful for one in your condition ? If your servants leave most of their work undone, and spend the day in cards, and stage-playes, and feasting, and in merry chat, and then say, *Madam, are not cards, and playes, and jesting lawful ?*] Will you take it for a satisfactory answer ? And is it not worse that you deal with God ?

It is a most irrational and ungrateful error, to think that you may spend one hours time the more in *Idleness*, because that you are Rich. The reason were good, if labour were for nothing but to supply your own bodily necessities :

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necessities: But do you not believe that God is your Lord and Master? and that he giveth you not an hours time in vain, but appointeth you work for every hour? (except your necessary rest;) And that your time and wealth are but his talents? And bethink your selves whether a servant may say, I will do less work than my fellow servants, because I have more wages? And whether you may do less for God, because he giveth you more than others? But of this I have said so much in my Preface to my Book called [*The Crucifying of the world*] that I shall now dismiss it.

And what I have said especially to the Rich, (who think their loss of *Time* no sin,) I must say also to all others, O value *Time* before it's gone! Use it before it's taken from you! Dispatch the work that you were made for: Repent and turn to God unfeignedly: Prepare for death without delay: *Time* will not stay; nor will it ever be recovered: Were it not lest I should write a Treatise instead of a Preface, I would especially press this on all these following sorts of people. 1. Those that are *young*, who have yet the flower of their *Time* to use, that they cast it not away on childish vanity or lust. 2. Those that have lost much *Time* already, that they shew the sincerity of their Repentance, by Redeeming the rest, and lose no more.

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3. Those that are yet ignorant, ungodly and unprepared for death, and the world to come; O what need have these to make haste, and quickly get into a safer state, before their Time be at an end. 4. Those that in sickness resolved and promised, if God would recover them, to redeem their Time. 5. The weak and aged, who nature and sickness do call upon to make haste. 6. The poor and servants, whose opportunities for spiritual means are scant, and therefore have need to take them when they may; especially on the Lord's day. Those that live under excellent helps, and advantages for their souls; which if they neglect, they may never have again. 8. And those that by Office or Power have special opportunity to do good. All these have a double obligation to value and redeem their Time.

But because in my Book called NOW or NEVER, I have already urged these to diligence, I shall only add this one request, to sportful Youth, to sensual Brutes, to the idle sort of the Gentry, to impenitent loyterers, to Gamesters, and to all that *have Time to spare*, that they will soberly use their reason in the answer of these following Questions, before they proceed to waste the little Time that is remaining, as vainly as they have done the rest. And I earnestly beseech them, and require them, as in the sight and hearing of
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their Judge, that they deny me not so friendly and reasonable a suit.

Quest. 1. Do you consider well the *shortness* and *uncertainty* of your *Time*? You came but lately into the world, and it is but a very little while till you must leave it. The glass is turned upon you : and it is unceasingly running. A certain number of motions your Pulse must beat, and beyond that number it shall not be permitted to strike another stroke. Whatever you are thinking or saying, or doing, you are posting on to your final state : And O how quickly will you be there ! suppose you had seventy years to live, how soon will they be gone? But you are not sure of another hour. Look back on all your Time that is past, and tell me whether it made not haste? And that which is to come, will be as hasty. Will not the tolling of the Bell instruct you? Will not graves and bones, and dust instruct you? While many are hourly crowding into another world, will conscience permit you to be idle? Doth it not tell you what you have to do, and call upon you to dispatch it? Can you play away your time, and idle it away, whilst the bell is tolling, whilst the sick are groaning, whilst every pulse and breath is telling you, that you are hastening to your end? Do you consider what a wonder of providence it is, that all your humours, parts and organs, that so many arteries,

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arteries, nerves and vains, should be kept in order one year to an end? If you have no pains or sickness to admonish you, do you not know what a fragile thing is flesh? which as the flower fadeth, doth hasten to corruption and to dust? How short is your abode in your present dwelling like to be, in comparison of your abode in dust and darkness? And can you have while now to waste so many hours, in the adorning, the easing and the pampering of such a lump of rottenness, and forget the part that lives for ever? Must you stay on earth so short a time, and have you any of this little time to spare? Yea so much of it as you daily waste, in idleness, play and vain curiosity?

Quest. 2. Do you soberly consider, what work you have for all your time? and on how important a business you come into the world? Believe it, O man and Woman, it is to do all that ever must be done, to prepare for an everlasting life? Endless Joy or misery is the certain reward, and consequent of the spending of your present Time! And O that God! would open your eyes, to see how much you have to do, in order to this eternal end! You have ignorant minds which must be instructed, and knowledge is not easily and quickly got! Poor Ministers of Christ can tell you that, who with many years labour can scarce bring one half a

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Parish to understand the very Principles of the Christian Religion. You have souls depraved by original sin, and turned from God, and enslaved to the world and flesh; and these must be *renewed* and Regenerate: You *must* have a new and holy nature, that you may have a new and holy life. How many false opinions have you to be untaught? How many weighty lessons to learn? How many pernicious customs to be changed? How many powerful corruptions to be mortified? How many temptations to be overcome? How many graces to be obtained? and then to be exercised, and strengthened, and preserved? Is it easie to get a solid faith? a tender heart? a faithful conscience? a fervent desire and love to God? a quieting confidence and trust? a well guided zeal? and preserving fear? an absolute resignation, self-denyal and obedience? a hatred of all sin? a love to holiness? a fitness and ability for every duty? a love to our neighbour as our selves? a true love to our enemies? a contentedness with our condition? a readiness and joyful willingness to die? a certainty of the pardon of all our sins, and of our title to eternal happiness? a longing after the coming of Christ? a publick spirit, wholly devoted to the common good? Is it nothing to do all that which you have to do, in meditation, in self-examination, in prayer,

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in educating children, in teaching and governing your families; in all duties of your other relations? to superiours? to inferiours? to equals? to neighbours? to enemies? to all? Is it nothing to order and govern your hearts? your thoughts? your passions? your tongues? Alas, sirs, have you all this to do? and yet can you have while to *fling*, and game, and play and fool away your Time? If a poor man had but six pence in his purse, to buy bread for himself and for his family, and would give a groat of it to see a Poppet-play, and then dispute that Poppet-playes are lawful, how would you judge of his understanding and his practice? O how much worse is it in you (as the case is more weighty,) when you have but a little uncertain Time, to do so much, so great, so necessary work in, to leave it almost all undone, and throw away that Time, on cards and playes and sensuality and idleness? I tell you, Time is a most pretious thing: more pretious than gold, or jewels, or fine cloaths; and he is incomparably more foolish, that throws away his Time, than he that throws away his gold, or trampleth his cloaths or ornaments in the dirt. This, this is the foolish pernicious prodigality.

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Quest. 3. Have you deeply considered that everlasting condition is, which all your Time is given you to prepare for? Doth it not awaken and amaze thy soul, to think what it is to be for ever; I say, *for ever*, in *Joy* or *Misery*? in Heaven or Hell? one of these will certainly and shortly be thy portion, whatever unbelief may say against it? O what a heart hath that stupified sinner, that can idle away that little Time, which is allotted him to prepare for his everlasting state? That knoweth he shall have but this hasty life to win or lose eternal Glory in, and can play it away as if he had nothing to do with it? and Heaven and Hell were indifferent to him? or were but insignificant words?

Quest. 4. What maketh you so loth to dye, if Time be no more worth than to cast away unprofitably? The worth of Time, is for the work that is to be done in Time? To a man in a palsey, an Apoplexie, a madness, that cannot make use of it, it is little worth; If you were sick and like to die this night, would you not pray that you might live a little longer? I beseech you cheat not your souls by willful self-deceit. Tell me, or tell your consciences, How would you form such a prayer to God for your recovery if you were now sick? Would you say, Lord give me a little more Time to play at cards and dice

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in? Let me see a few more Maskes and playes! Let me have a little Time more to please my flesh, in idleness, feasting and the pleasures of worldliness and pride! Did you ever find such a prayer in any Prayer book? Would you not rather say, Lord vouchsafe me a little more time to repent of all my loss of time, and to redeem it in preparation for eternal life, and to make my calling and election sure? And will you yet live so contrary to your prayers, to your consciences, and to reason it self?

Quest. 5. Is the work that you were made for hitherto well done? Are you regenerate and renewed to the Heavenly nature? Are you strong and stablished in grace? Have you made sure of pardon and salvation? Are your hearts in Heaven? and is your daily conversation there? And are you ready with well grounded hope and peace, to wellcome death, and appear in judgement? If all this were done, you had yet no excuse for idling away one day or hour, because there is still more work to do, as long as you have time to do it. (and if this were done, you would have that within you, which would not suffer you to cast away your time.) But for these men or women to be passing away Time in sloth or vanity, who are utterly behind hand, and have lost the most of their lives already, and are yet unregenerate, and strangers to a new

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new and heavenly life, and are unpardoned and in the power and guilt of sin, and unready to die, and shall certainly be for ever lost, if they die before that grace renew them, I say again, for such as *these* to be sporting away their Time, is a practice which fully justifieth the holy Scriptures, when they call such persons, *Fools*, and *such as have no understanding*, unless it be to do evil, and successfully destroy themselves.

Quest. 6. Do you think if you neglect and lose your Time, that ever you should come again into this world, to spend it better? If you idle away this life, will God ever give you another here? If you do not your work well, shall you ever come again to mend it? O no sirs, there is no hope of this. Act this part well, for as you do it, you must speed for ever; There is no coming back to correct your errors. I have elsewhere told you, that it must be *Now or Never*. And yet have you Time to spare on Vanity?

Quest. 7. Do you mark what *dying men* say of Time, and how they value it? (unless they be blocks that are past feeling.) How ordinarily do good and bad then wish, that they had spent Time better, and cry out, O that it were to spend again? Then they are promising, O if it were to do again, we would spend that time in heavenly lives, and fruitful obedience, which we spent in curiosity,

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sity, idleness and superfluous sensual delights? Then they cry, O that God would renew our Time, and once more try us how we will spend it. Alas sirs, why should wise men so much differ in health and sickness! Why should that time be vitified now, which will seem so precious then?

Quest. 8. How think you the miserable souls in Hell would value Time, if they were again sent hither, and tryed with it again on the terms as we are? Would they feast it away, and play it away as you do now; and then say, Are not playes and cards and feasting lawful? Every fool will be wise too late, *Matth. 25. 3. 8, 11.* Bethink you what their experience teacheth them, and let warning make you wise more seasonably, and at a cheaper rate.

Quest. 9. Do you believe that you must give an account of your Time? and that you must look back from Eternity on the Time which you now spend? If you do, what account will then be most comfortably to you? Had you not rather then find upon your accounts that all your hours have been spent to the best advantage of your souls, than that abundance of them have been cast away on fruitless toys? Will you have more comfort then in the hours which you spent in Heart-searching, and Heart-reforming and learning and practising the word of God,

or

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or in those which you spent upon needless sports, curiosity or idleness? Do now as you would desire you had done.

Quest. 10. How do you now wish that you had spent the Time which is already past? Had you not rather that it had been spent in fruitful holiness and good works, than in idleness and fleshly pleasures? If not, you have not so much as a shadow of Repentance; and therefore can have no just conceit that you are forgiven? If *yea*, then why will you do that for the Time to come, which you wish for the time past that you had never done? And hereby shew that your Repentance is hypocritical, and will not prove the pardon of your sin? For so far as any man truly Repenteth, he is resolved not to do the like, if it were to do again, under the like temptations.

Quest. 11. Do you know who attendeth you while you are loitering away your Time? I have elsewhere told you, that the patience and mercy of God is waiting on you: that Christ is offering you his grace, and the holy spirit moving you to a wiser and a better course; that Sun and Moon and all the Creatures here on earth, are offering you their service: Besides Ministers and all other helpers of your salvation: And must all these wait upon you while you serve the flesh, and vilifie your Time, and live as for nothing?

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Quest. 12. Do you consider what you lose in the loss of Time; That time which you are gaming or idling away, you might have spent in entertaining grace, in heavenly converse, in holy pleasures, in making your salvation sure. And all this you lose in your loss of Time: which all your sports will never compensate.

Quest. 13. Is the Devil idle while you are idle? Night and day he is seeking to devour you: And will you, like the silly bird, sit chirping and singing in your wanton pleasures, when the Devils gun is ready to give fire at you? If you saw but how busie he is about you, and for what, you would be busier your selves for your own preservation, and less busie in doing nothing than you are.

Quest. 14. Do you really take Christ, and his Apostles and Saints, to be the fittest pattern for the spending of your time? If you do not, why do you usurp the name of Christians: Is he a Christian who would not live like Christians? or that taketh not Christ for his Master and Example? But if you say, Yea; I pray you then tell us how much Time Christ or any of his Apostles, did spend at cards, or dice, or stage-playes? how much in curiosity about dressing and superfluous ornaments, about unnecessary pomp and courtship; how much in sluggishness, idleness and vain discourse? or how much in furnishing

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nishing their bodies, their attendants, their habitations with matter of splendour and vain glory? Did they waste so much of the day, in *nothings*, and *need-nots* as our slothful sensual Gentry do? Or did they not rather spend their time in holy living and fervent praying, and in doing all the good they could to the souls and bodies of all about them? and in the labours of a lawful bodily employment? Write after this copy; rather than after that which is set by the sensual fools of the world, if you make any account of Gods acceptance! Do as the Saints did, if you will speed as they; or else for shame never honour their names and memorials to your own condemnation! If you will spend your Time as the *flesh* and the *world* teach you, rather than as Christ hath taught you, you must look for your payment from the flesh and the world. And why then in Baptism did you renounce them and vow to follow Christ? *Be not deceived, God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap; For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption: but he that soweth to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap life everlasting, Gal. 6. 7, 8.* Be- think you what the reason was that the ancient Fathers and Churches, so much condemned the going to the spectacles of Theaters; and why the Canons made it

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such a crime for a Minister to play at dice
(Read Dr. *Jo. Reynolds* his cloud of witnesses of all sorts against stage-plays.)

Reader, if thou think this counsel or reprehension too precise or strict, grant me but this reasonable request, and I have my end [Live in the World but with a soul that is awake, that soberly considereth what haste Time maketh, and how quickly thy glass will be run out; how fast death is coming, and how soon it will be with thee? What a work it is to get a carnal unprepared soul to be renewed and made holy, and fitted for another world; What a terrible thing it will be to lie on a death-bed with a guilty Conscience, unready to die, and utterly uncertain whither thou must next go, and where thou must abide for ever! Foresee but what use of thy present times will be most pleasing or displeasing to thy thoughts at last, and spend it now but as thou *wilt wish* thou hadst spent it; and value it, but as it is *valued by all* when it is *gone*; Use it but as *true Reason* telleth thee will make most to thy endless happiness, and as is most agreeable to the ends of thy Creation and Redemption; and as becometh that man who soberly and often thinketh what it is to be either in Heaven or Hell for ever, and to have no more but this present short uncertain life, to decide that question,

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question, [*which must be thy lot ?*] and to make all the preparation that ever must be made for an endless life] I say, do *but thus* lay out thy *Time* as Reason should command a Reasonable creature, and I desire no more. I have warned thee in the words of truth and faithfulness; The Lord give thee a heart to take this warning !

Sept. 23.
1667.

Thy compassionate
Monitor,

Rich. Baxter.

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THE
REDEMPTION
OF
TIME.

Ephes. 5. 16.

*Redeem the Time, because the dayes
are evil.*



Hilest I bethought my
self of a portion of ho-
ly Writ to treat upon,
that might hold some
agreement with the
present season; - this
short sentence offered it self unto my
mind.

mind. At the first I rejected it as impertinent, but after a second and more serious view, methought it was the most fit Scripture that I could make choice of, on this occasion: for howbeit it hath pleased the common sort of men, to stile these festival dayes with the name of good times; yet by reason of the gross abuse, to which the corruption of men hath made them subject, they may very well receive an alteration of their title, and in a quite contrary phrase, be termed evil dayes; yea, and that in the highest degree of all, the worst of dayes. Now in this time wherein time is so lavishly mispent, I hope it cannot seem inconvenient, or untimely, to give a brief exhortation concerning the right use of Time.

These words which I have read, lead us into that path: being part of an exhortation begun in the former
verse.

verse. There in general he had exhorted them to be most strictly careful of their wayes, and to direct their course of life in such respective sort, as they might deserve the name of wise, not unwise men: commending herein unto them and us, that very strictness and preciseness, wherewith the world hath now long since pickt a quarrel and fallen out. And because this was but a general rule, he seconds it with some particulars, by which we may be led on to the like instances in other matters. The first of these specials is placed in the well disposing of Time, in this verse: Where having set down the duty of Christians in this behalf, he backs it with a reason; which in it self and to a spiritual understanding, is most sound and firm; but to the carnal judgement of a carnal man, is void of all soundness and reason. The duty is, to buy out the Time, to trafficke with it, as men do with wares;
and

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and when it is in other mens hands (as I may say) to give something (yea , any thing) that we may get it into our own hands for good uses. He means , that we should use our greatest care and diligence (even that which we would employ in matters most nearly concerning us) to win all the time we possibly can , for the duties of Religion and Godliness. His argument to confirm this exhortation , is taken from the contrary , (if we look on it with a carnal eye , it will seem inconsequent , halting , and not able to bear up the Conclusion) it is , *because the days are evil* : that is , the customs and manners of the greatest part of men that live , are wicked and lewd. Now because the number and rout of the world is so strongly bent to all manner of ungodliness , as that they have even tainted the time it self , and corrupted the very dayes ; the Apostle would therefore have the *Ephesians* , and all other

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other Christians so much the more industrious, to take all seasons and occasions for the bettering of themselves. Because other men are naught, and stark naught, therefore ought faithful Christians to be good, and very good, and to turn all opportunities to this end and use, that they may be furtherances to make them good.

The world would have framed a more crooked conclusion from this ground, and have said, Because men are so generally and extremely bad, (for that is noted in saying, *the days are evil*) we must therefore needs strain courtesie a little, and not be too strict, lest we should be over much different from other men, and incur the by-name of Singularists. But the Apostle telleth us, that because the waves of men are excessively disordered, and full of naughtiness, we should bestow so much the more pains, that we might not be carried down

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down the violent stream and deluge of an
unsanctified living ; and unto this in- deal
tent should earnestly watch , and di- perta
ligently take all good occasions of get- thou
ting and doing good. You see in part Tim
the meaning of this short sentence , thou
which containeth a few words indeed , deal
but is stufte full of worthy matter , can
which (according as my weakness can born
attain) I shall strive to spread before else
your eyes , unfolding it in such man- take
ner , as that you may perceive the slip
things , that lay therein closely wrap- hav
ped up before. wil
sho

Doct. The point which the words
offer to our consideration at the first
sight, is this, That all Christians ought
to be very good husbands for their
time. Good hours and opportunities
are merchandize of the highest rate &
price : and whosoever will have his
soul thrive , must not suffer any of
these bargains of Time to pass him,
but must buy up , and buy out all the
minutes thereof. No man of trade
can

The Redemption of Time. 7

can be more careful to chaffer, and deal in the most gainful things that pertain to his occupation, than we should be to deal in this ware of Time, wherein every Christian is, or should be a well taught and practised dealer. As such kind of men (if they can either make mony themselves, or borrow it of their friends, yea; or else (such is the greediness of men) take it up of the Usurer) will not let slip any commodity wherein they have skill, and are perswaded that it will bring in large profit within a short time of return: so should every good man use all diligence (for diligence is in stead of mony here, and care in stead of coin) to gain every day, every hour, and every minute, (so much as may be possible) from all unprofitable actions, and overworldly affairs, to bestow the same on the duties of Religion and godliness. This being such a parcel of ware, as if it be wisely bestowed, when it
is

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is heedfully gotten ; will come in again with both hands full of profit for recompence of ones pains taken in that behalf. This self-same exhortation, this same Apostle delivers in so many words unto the *Colossians*, when he saith, *Walk wisely towards them that are without, and redeem the time,* Col. 2. 5. See how *Paul*, an old beaten and experienced dealer in these matters for the soul, doth neither forget nor neglect to teach his apprentices (as I may call them) the very secrets and mysteries of the trade of good living, whereof this is one, even the thrifty laying out and getting in of time : which being repeated to the *Colossians*, (as well as delivered to these *Ephesians*) comes with a double charge upon our minds, to make us heedful in these bargains. And that excellent petition of *Moses* (the man of God) doth mean nothing else but this, when in other words he saith, *Teach me so to number my days, that I*
may

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may apply my heart to wisdom, Ps. 90. 12. For he means, that God would enable him with grace, so seriously to consider of the shortness of this life, and the transitoriness of this present world; as that he might take all occasions, and use all means to bend his heart to the seeking and obtaining of the true knowledge of God and himself, and so the true fear of God, which is the beginning of wisdom.

And the want of this husbandry Christ doth mournfully lament in the City of *Jerusalem*, setting out unto us also the grievous and dismal effects and consequents of this heedlessness, in regard of taking time, and using the fit opportunity: *O (saith he) if thou hadst even known, at the least in this thy day, those things that pertain unto thy peace! but now are they hid from thine eyes, &c. Luke 9. 42.* as if he had said, Hitherto thou hast had the means to learn what made for thy good, and what might have prevented

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vented thy ruine ; and if thou hadst but even at this last hour marked and considered them , thou mightest have escaped these fearful judgements : but now that thou hast been all this while wanting to God , he will hereafter be wanting to thee ; thou shalt never have any true knowledge of these things , nor ever avoid these miserable calamities. Because they did not use time , whilst time did serve , to repent and turn to God , therefore after , it was too late , God would not hear them nor help them. They that refuse the good offer of a good bargain from God , shall not have this bargain offered again at their pleasure : yea God will not deal with them at their leisure , that would not deal with him at his leisure. And Wisdom (in *Solomon's* wise book of *Proverbs*) speaks to this effect of ungodly men , *Prov.* 1. 24, 25, 26, 27. That when their misery comes , she will laugh at them , because

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cause when she gave her good instructions to prevent this misery, they laughed at her.

The neglect of taking the fit time and occasion to follow Wisdom's wholesome counsel, and to come when she calls, plungeth scornful men into such a depth of misery, as that there is no means of recovery. For when wisdom laughes a man to scorn, whither shall he repair for succour? And to this intent (of husbanding our time well) notable is the saying of the same Apostle in another place, bidding us, *whilst we have time, do good to all*, Gal. 6. 10. as much as if he had told us, that time must so much the rather be bestowed in doing good, (and then it is redeemed) because we have no such great store of it, as we do foolishly imagine. The vessel of time is not so full, (as most men dream) nay, it will soon come to the bottom: 'tis then wisdom to spare be-
time,

time, and not in the very dregs and lees. All these places do in most plain manner confirm the point, *viz.* that every Christian must be very saving and thrifty of his time, that is, must convert all occasions to the good of his soul, and furthering of his reckoning, not suffering by his will any hour or minute (more than needs must) to be laid out in any thing, but matters that may fit him for a better life. This is in truth to have ones conversation in Heaven, when one upon the least occasion is ready to make one step further thitherwards: when one gives all his time to God, but so much as may be more especially to religious exercises, and such things as do after a peculiar sort make for a better life; not letting slip any means of furtherance, that is offered him this way. Now for your better direction in this saving thrift, and for the more full understanding of this point, and more easie

the practising of this needful duty, in purpose to stand some while in shewing these two things. First, from what time is to be redeemed. Secondly, what the time is which must be redeemed.

For the first, we must understand, that there be five Hucksters of time, as many Cormorants and Ingrossers of this precious ware, which betwixt them (for the most part) get up all the hours of mens lives, not suffering the soul to enjoy so much as an hour for its own use, upon the best occasion to benefit it self. These thieves, when I have told you their names, I will describe more at large. They be, 1. Vain sports. 2. Vain speeches. 3. Immoderate sleeping or sluggishness. 4. Vain thoughts. Lastly, Immoderate following of worldly busineses and affairs. Play, dawdling, sleeping, foolish thinking, excessive rooting in the earth. Now for these fond sports (amongst
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which I comprehend riotous feasting and belly-cheer, a companion of gaming, for the most part, and also that trifling and womanish disease of curiousness in putting on apparel for these (I say) it is easie to prove that they do eat up these good hours which otherwise would much enrich the soul of man. *Solomon* (the wisest of meer men that lived since *Adam*) hath set it down as a sure rule (that never fails, scarce ever admits exception) *That he which loves pastime shall be poor, and he that loves wine and oyl shall not be rich, Prov* 21. 17. If this saying be understood only of the body, it is most true but for these things will make a man extremely reedy in the midst of large possessions, and plenteous revenues. But if we apply it to the soul, (as we see no cause why it may not be applied to both) it is most universally true. He that is so wedded to his pleasures, and besotted upon vain delights,

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delights, as that the current of his life is carried that way, or else too great a part of the stream is turned hither; shall be destitute of understanding, shall have a naked, ragged, matted soul: and that comes, because he hath not used his time well, by the right employment whereof he might have got wealth for his better part; I mean, unto his mind and heart. A threed-bare heart, needy of knowledge, comes from a voluptuous life stuffed with pleasures. And the Prophet *Isaiah* cries out, *Chap. 5. 12.* with a woful and a better cry against those which had the Timbrel, the Pipe, and the Harp in their feast, but would not regard the work of the Lord: all their dayes were taken up in eating and drinking, in banqueting and feasting, in good cheer and merry-making; so that there was no time to meditate and think on those afflictions, whereby God did warn them to repentance and

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amendment; which is most contrary to this duty of redeeming the time, for all this time is even lost and cast away. And had we no other proof than our own experience in this behalf, would it not manifestly convince, that he which desires to redeem the time, must flie these vain delights and sports? For do we not plainly see, what a canker it is in a number of mens lives? when (many days) they bestow three or four hours together, yea, half the day, if not the whole, in Dicing, Carding, Bowling, Shovel-board, of the like idle (if not wicked) exercises? doth not this waste and pour forth time over-lavishly? Or can that man have so much rest and quiet, or so much fitness and opportunity to do good to his soul, as his wise care in cutting off these needless recreations, or vexations rather, would have afforded him? For these vain pleasures are not alone mischievous hinderers of this thrift, in that

that they consume the very hours themselves, but as much, or more also, in that they disettle the heart, and pull the affections out of joynt: so that a man is driven to take as much pains to set his heart to a good exercise, as would well have dispatched the duty, had he not been thus unfitted. Now what a miserable loss is it when a man is robbed of his time, and of his heart both at once? and by both kept from reading, praying, meditating, examining his heart; or any such good exercise for his souls advantage. Wherefore if any man would so prevent these vain and foolish sports, that they should not spoil him of his heart and hours: let him observe these two rules in his sports, and then he shall do well in these respects.

First, (this being presupposed, that he do not use any recreations, but those which he can prove to be in them-

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themselves lawful :) First, I say, for the beginning of recreation; let every man know, that recreation must follow labour, for the most part: or if at any time it go before it, it must be very little, only to fit one for labour. The Lord allows a man no sport (though never so lawful in it self) until such time as his body or mind do stand in need of it; chiefly when they have been busied in some such honest affairs, as by wearying them, have made them unfit to further labour, so that they must again be fitted thereo by recreation. Until pains-taking have made the body or mind not so well able to take pains, there is no allowance ordinarily for recreation. All our sports and recreations, if we will use them well (I speak of those which are lawful) must be to our body or mind; as the Mowers whetstone or rifle is to his Sythe, to sharpen it when it grows dull. He that when his Sythe is dul-

led,

led, will not (upon a desire to do more work) take time to whet it, shall cut less, and with more pain, and more unhandfomely than he need to do; so he, that when his body or mind is tyred or heavy, will not use some honest refreshing, shall do less, and with less dexterity than he might. But on the other side, if the Mower should do nothing from morning to noon, or from noon to night, but whet, whet, whet, rubbing his Sythe, he would both marr the Sythe, and be counted an idle work-man also, for losing his dayes work; so he that will run after the most honest delights, when neither the weariness of his body, nor heaviness of mind requires the same (but only upon a fond lust or longing after them) shall in time destroy his wit and strength, and in the mean season marvellous unthriftilly mispend his time. Therefore let not a man begin the day with play, though

never so lawful, unless his body or mind require some necessary exercise to make it more apt for his calling. He that sets into the day sportingly shall be sure to go through it, either lumpishly or sinfully, much more if he spend all the day from morning to night in playing; let it be never so much holy-day, or have he what other excuse he will. This rule is for beginning of sports.

The second is for the measure and continuance of them, where this is a general and a firm direction; that it is not lawful for a man in an ordinary course, to spend more time in any pastime, upon any day, than in religious exercises. I mean chiefly private religious exercises; I say, it is utterly unlawful to bestow a larger time any day upon the most lawful delight, than in private religious exercises, or at least in a customable course so to do. This is plainly proved by that which Christ speaks

ious, saying, *Mat. 6. 33. First seek the Kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof.* You see here commanded to prefer the seeking of Heaven, before any other thing whatsoever; so let that have the chief place in our souls, and in our lives. Now he that first seeks the Kingdom of Heaven, cannot bestow more time in sports of any sort, than in those things which do directly make for the obtaining of eternal life, and that righteousness which will bring one thereunto; such as are, hearing and reading the Word, praying, meditating, examining the heart, conferring, and the like. And surely this is a most equal thing, that the most needful duty should have the most time bestowed upon it. Yea, and it is a most easie rule to all sorts of men, that have seasoned their hearts with the true fear of God. For if a mans calling lye in bodily works, then the very exercises of Religion are a refreshing

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to his body, in that he doth for the space while they continue, desist from his bodily labour, (and his calling affords sufficient stirring of the body for health ;) so that if he be religiously minded, and have indeed set his delight on God, he may well give as much time to these actions, as to any carnal sports. But if any mans calling lye in study, or such like labour of the mind ; first, the change is a great refreshing, and variety a delight ; and then there be religious exercises, which will refresh the mind as well as any sports ; and for so much exercise as health requires, it is not long in using, because nature is here, as in other matters, content with a little, howsoever men seek excuses by belying her : so that at the least, an equal portion of time must be allotted to God and Religion : as to sports and delights, even of Students, if they will first seek the Kingdom of God. Therefore let a man measure out the time of sport-

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sporting and recreating himself, by the time he takes to pray, to read, to meditate, to sing Psalms, to converse of good things, or the like; and know that he hath not liberty from God to employ ordinarily so much time, never to employ one minute more, in the most unoffensive sports, than in these services of God. Now let a man conform himself to these two rules: Begin not to play, till need of body or mind crave it: Continue not sports longer than a man hath, or shall Continue some godly private exercise of Religion, and he shall save his time well from his first Thief.

Now comes to be considered the next spender, or rather robber of time, that is, idle twatling or babbling; and concerning this, our Saviour Christ deals plainly with us, saying *That of every idle word which men shall speak, they shall give account at the day of judgement*: think well of this
fen-

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sentence, and lay up every word. Thou must not alone give account of thy works, but also of thy words: thou must not alone be called to a reckoning for moving of thy hand, foot, or whole body, but of thy tongue also: and that not alone for wicked words, sinful words, harmful words, speeches in themselves infectious and rotten; but for idle and waste words, and not only for a number of idle words, for a whole throng or fleet of them, but for every idle word.

Now then if there be an account to be given, and a reckoning to be made for these rubbish speeches, judge, if it be not a want of redeeming the time, to lay it out in such a thing as will bring a sore and heavy burden afterwards without repentance to cast it off; and judge if he which makes much of time had not need take much heed of this ill-spent breath. Not alone then wicked speaking (when one belcheth forth lewd
and

and filthy words, not slanderous and backbiting talk, (when one whispers of his neighbours faults behind his back, uttering (perhaps) also lying reports, and fathering that upon him which he never did or meant;) but even vain, needless, and unprofitable words, (which tend to no good or wholesome use for the soul or body) are a mis-spending of time, and contrary to this precept; and therefore also to be shunned of him that is this way thrifely disposed.

No man can talk idly, but he casts himself upon a double damage, even the loss of a word, and the loss of time; two great losses, what ever men imagine of them: And therefore the *Apostle Paul* also finds fault with a certain sort of women that were praters, which would go from house to house, twatling and babbling out frothy speech that was good for nothing, which fault he condemns as a matter something worse than idleness,

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ness, or doing nothing, when one talks toys or trifles, and speaks shadows or gawds that yield no profit. Such twatling cuts out the heart of good time, for it hath seldom any measure, it creeps by little and little over a great part of the day, and sometimes of the night. How many winter nights do men suffer themselves to be robbed of, by this childish babling? And in the fourth verse of this Chapter the Apostle forbids foolish speaking and jesting: The one is a roving discourse, gathering together a great deal of chaffie geer, that will feed no man: a busie, but absurd prosecuting of a headless and footless tale (as we may call it in our phrase.) The other is a setting of ones self, and sharpening of his wit, to coyn pretty and witty scoffs and conceits that may move laughter, and for this end only: both these are condemned, as unlawful, and unbeseeming Christians.

There

There must be a difference made betwixt a smooth and pleasant uttering of ones mind in seemly phrases, and good and delightful terms and manner; and this whetting of the wit, to bandy and toss sharp and brinish taunts and quirks.

Now this pleasantness of the most honest sort is not to be used as a custom, but in the nature of a refreshing, when men are dulled for better matter. For laughter being a power of Gods creating, and wholesome to the body, and therefore lawful, it cannot be unlawful in a seemly sort, harmlesly to move laughter by words; but it must not be jesting: one must not give himself to it, and make it his occupation for an hour or two together. Now none can be ignorant, how great an hinderance this vain speech is to the well imploying of time. For do we not see, that in many places, whole dayes are cast away in the deep gulf of roving,
and

and unprofitable runnagate-babbling to no purpose? And that whole meals are devoured in gibing and jesting, if without taking the sacred name of God in vain, and hurting ones brothers name, (which is very seldom, yet excessively, and not without thrusting out better matter, which is a grievous fault. Wherefore that we may be well armed against this robber, let us observe diligently these two rules:

First, Let us make conscience of our words, & of the moving of our tongue, knowing it to be a necessary duty that God hath imposed upon us, to have our words always gracious, and seasoned with salt; always good for the matter, and tempered with wisdom for the manner. Which precept the Apostle adds presently after this, of redeeming the time (to the *Colossians*) *Col.* 4. 5. as a notable part of it. The Law of Grace then must be the bridle of
our

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our tongue, and Wisdom must raign in our mouths, so that we speak nothing but that which may be for some profit to our own or others soul or body, being fully tempered to the present circumstances of time, place, &c. where and when we speak. For the words are gracious, not alone when they tend to the further edification of the soul in some matter of Religion; but also when they be busied about ones honest outward affairs, and lawful calling, this being a great furtherance to godliness; that a man may know how (and accordingly practise it) to follow his calling with dexterity and wisdom.

Now he that would not have unnecessary trifling words steal into his heart, and out of his mouth, and so spoil him of good seasons, must set it down, as a thing to which his conscience is bound, (as well as not to lye, swear, or slander) not to speak one word, whereof he cannot give some

some reason from the good that he doth aim at in speaking of it. And every man must know, that having let slip such a word, he hath committed such a sin, as makes him lyable to Gods judgement, and the sentence of condemnation.

The want of resolving the heart thus, causeth many to take liberty to their tongues, (and harmful liberty it is) and yet to think they have done no harm to themselves in so doing. And therefore the common excuse of such twatlers is this: I hope that it is no harm: yea, but what good was it? If it were not directed to some good, it hath done harm, for it hath broken Gods Commandment, and set thy self deeper in debt than thou wast before, thou hast one trespass more to answer for, before Gods Tribunal: no man shall ever avoid this puddle, that will not be perswaded it is a damnable sin to step into it. First then, labour to convince thine heart, and
frame

frame thy practice to this rule in all speaking.

Secondly, for honest comely mirth in speech, (besides that it must not relish of lust, nor savour of malice and prophaneness, for then it is worse than idle words) it ought to be bounded with this rule; namely, that it be used as a means to quicken our selves or others against some natural heaviness or deadness, by which the heart is made unapt for better conference, and other exercises of more profitable use; and when this effect is brought to pass, that laughter hath scattered the mist of dulness from off the heart and mind (or if no such occasion be offered) then let mirth and natural laughter give place to his betters: otherwise coming into a continued custom, and shouldering out more needful communication, it takes the name and nature of jesting, and is a thing much unbeseeming the stayedness of a Christian. Thus the tongue.

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tongue may be bound from dealing falsely with the heart, and coufening the soul of good hours and occasions.

Now followeth the third devourer of time, and that is immoderate sleeping or sluggishness. The wise King *Solomon* bare a great hatred to this Thief, and gives many warnings and caveats; whereby men might learn to take heed of it. The bed is a very cunning and slie coufener, that useth a pleasing trick to deceive a man, and robs him, under shew of friendship. . Now *Solomon* hath made, a most fit description of a sluggard caught by the whiles of sleep and sloth; setting him out to the light, *Prov.* 6. 9, 10, 11. where he brings him in roaming himself, and rubbing his eyes with an unwilling hand, uttering broken and sleepy sentences, as one not half awake. First, he calls him up (as it were) saying; *How long wilt thou sleep, when wilt thou rise*

rise out of thy sleep? As if he had said
Ho, Sir, it is time to get up; what
not out of your bed yet, at this time
of the day? Then mark the drowsie,
flumbring, and senseless answer: *A
little sleeps, a little slumbers*, (for the
Original hath the words in the plu-
ral number, well besitting a sluggard)
a little folding of the hands to sleep.
See how speaking of sleep all is in
the littles; and though he names
sleeps, yet it is but a little in his con-
ceit. He tells not when he will rise,
but he cannot rise yet; and when he
hath had enough, and too much al-
ready, then he must have a little more,
begging for sleep as one would beg
for bread. He asks a little, because
he would not be denied. First, He
must have sleeps; and having slept,
he must have slumbers, and having
slumbred, he must fold his hands,
and roam and tumble himself. Be-
hold a sleeper in his colours; and
mark what answer *Solomon* gives, he
spends

spends no more time to call him up, but tells him his doom as he lies in his bed ; *Therefore thy poverty comes as a traveller, and thy necessity as an armed man.* As if he had said, Well, be it so, if you will needs, sleep on, take your belly-ful of sleep, but know, that sith you shew such skill in begging sleep, you shall even become a beggar for it ; sith you will have your fill of sleep, you shall have little enough of any wealth ; poverty will pursue you, and overtake you ; it will follow you, and surprize you ; it will make haste and strike home, you cannot run from it, nor resist it, it comes with speed and with force ; it will take you in bed, where you cannot flie away from it, nor drive it from you : and what he saith of outward poverty, is most certain of inward penury ; a sluggard hath so much the less grace ; by how much he hath the more sleeps and slumbers. So the same wise King hath set out a slug-

slugard in another place, saying, that
a slugard tumbles himself on his bed,
as the door on the hinges, Prov. 16. 14.
that is, he is still there, and there must
be such a do before he can be removed
from off his couch, as if one were to
lift a door off the hooks, a man must
come with leavers to heave him off:
call him, waken him, bid him rise,
&c. all is little enough to rear him.
This sluggish humour (you see) is
condemned long ago, for a mis-
spender of time. And surely it is not
alone very dangerous, in regard of
the quantity and muchness of the
time which it filcheth; but also in
regard of the quality and goodness:
for it ordinarily feeds gluttonously
on the very fat of time, it eats the
very flower of the day, and con-
sumes the first fruits of our hours,
even the morning season. After sleep
hath made strong what labour hath
weakned; after that nature hath
been well refreshed, and the revived
spirits

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spirits come with a fresh supply of strength and nimbleness to serve the body and the mind : then for want of exercise all grows dull again , as a band of Souldiers , that grow effeminate by lying in garrison without labour all the Summer. Thus it robs one of the principal and most seasonable time , when the mind and body were both in the greatest fitness to read , pray , meditate , or to dispatch and cast any matter of ones calling : it is a thief that robs one , not of his baggage stuff , but even of his gold and jewels , (for some time is better than other , as much as some metal is better than others ; and this always for the most part takes away the most precious) yea , it hath one trick as much , and more dangerous than the former : If a man give himself to sluggishness , it will often follow him to the Church , and close up his eyes and ears , both of body and mind , from hearing and marking those

those most wholesome exhortations, which like so many Pearls, God's messenger with a liberal hand, according to the pleasure of his Lord, doth scatter amongst men, that who so will may take them up. The time of Preaching and Expounding the Word, with applying it, is the time of harvest, it is God's market day; nay, it is his dole or princely congie, when he gives gifts freely, and those of great worth too, unto those that will take them. How can it chuse but be a great hinderance to a mans estate to sleep in harvest, and to be in bed at such a time, when so much wealth is bestowing? Therefore this sleep, you see, is a most crafty and pernicious deceiver, and doth with much cunning over-reach a man, taking from him, for the most part, the morning time, and the time of hearing, two the most profitable seasons, and the most worthy to be redeemed of all others. Now

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again

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against the deceit of this false companion, a man may defend himself by following these two rules.

First, it is not lawful for any man, upon pretence of leisure from business, to take more sleep than is required for the strengthening and refreshing of his nature. The measure of ones sleep, or lying in bed, must not be according to ones business, but so much as his nature requires, for the better enabling of it to perform the duties of his calling, and of religion. Indeed a man may, and ought to break his sleep, and stint himself in this regard, when important business, either for the soul or body, do press upon him; but no man must take more sleep than is requisite for the sufficient refreshing of nature, upon vacation of necessary affairs. The reason of this is plain: It is a sin to strain and stretch natural things for the serving of lust, beyond that end for which they were created.

created and ordained. Now sleep, and lying in bed, was ordained for the strengthening of nature, and for the repairing of the spirits diminished by labour; wherefore it must not be drawn beyond this end, to the satisfying of a sluggish humour. So that, as it were a fault for a man to sit and cram himself with meat, till his stomach would turn back the morsels, because no business did call him from the table: so it is a sin to give ones self to immoderate sleeping or slugging in bed, (as our-word is, to sleep compass) because no urgent matter doth call him up. This is to be on the bed, as a door on the hinges, that one cannot rise till a leaver come; that is, something even almost of necessity. It is wicked to surfeit on sleep, as well as on meat. So then, it shall be a great help against sluggishness, to know that God allows not any man to be sluggish, and therefore to accustome ones self

to timely rising : for in this one thing, custom hath as much power almost as in any thing, so that look what is ones use, that he shall hardly refrain. He that doth customably forsake his bed, so soon as he feels his nature fresh, and his spirits quickened, shall with ease keep on in so doing. But he that takes liberty to laze himself, and dull his spirits for lack of use, shall find the more he sleeps, the more he shall bedrowse, till he become a very slave to his bed, and make sleep his master. So a healthful body, by confessing it to be his duty, (and through custom, though hard at first) drawing unto it a nature, may have the morning at command. And this is the first rule.

Secondly, For time of hearing the Word, he that would not be troubled with such sluggishness then, must look that he do use meat, and drink, and sleep moderately, in the first

first season of it; and then strive to quicken himself against carnal heaviness and sorrow, by prayer and meditation before-hand: which two things will keep a heathful body in such good temper, that sleep shall not ordinarily oppress it in this most sacred exercise.

Now follows the fourth Thief to be arraigned, and that is, Idle thoughts. Mans imaginations will be working, and tossing conceits up and down almost continually. Now all men by nature are so tainted with the sickness of vanity, that their minds will run willingly after nothing else, but that which vanity begets. And for this cause men have taken up a Proverb, to dazle their eyes, (if it might be) that this might not seem a fault. They say, that *Thought is free*; as though one should never answer for idle thoughts. And it is the common excuse of men to say, They think no harm; as though it

were enough, to hatch no mischievous and harmful conceits, notwithstanding they do exceed in idle and unprofitable imaginations. Whereby it may be seen, that men are so far from reforming this fault, and avoiding this thief, that they will not take it for a fault, nor esteem it as a thief of time. But this swallows up most of our solitary hours, when men are in bed, or alone in the night season, and cannot sleep; or when they be journeying and walking without company, they cannot then possibly talk with others, when no man is present; yet their mind doth busie it self in idle talking with it self, casting a thousand fond things before ones eyes; as, what if this should be? or, what if that should come to pass? and much ado to little purpose. This roving and frisking of the fantasie (like a wanton calf let loose from the stall) is a fretting worm, that eats out a great deal of most mens time, so that

that they cannot redeem it for the profit of their hearts. This puts by good meditations, and suggests featherly and light stuff, that hath no good substance in it; froth and some, which is not nourishment to the mind, but rather poison, in that it fills it full of wind; and a windy heart is no less burdensome than a windy stomach. This casts out the cogitation of God's benefits, that one may not be thankful for them; it shoulders away the thought of ones own sins, that he may not renew his godly sorrow and repentance for them; it justles out the consideration of God's graces, that we cannot set our affections on fire, to long and labour after them. And in all these respects, it takes away the benefit of much good opportunity. For every time a man is alone, separated from all company and outward business, there is an excellent occasion of furthering his own soul, of-

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ferred unto him. If any thing grieve him, he may freely disburden his heart into God's bosome; if he faulted any way, he may have full and free scope to confess and bewail it; if he want any good thing, there is leisure and place in as effectual manner, and with as many words as one can, to beg it of the Lord. Thus great riches might come to the soul by a well spent solitariness: but vain cogitations do deprive a man of all this, and do so blow up the mind with that which is nothing, as it grows swollen, like the flesh of him which hath the dropsie, so that it may well be called the dropsie of the mind. Now for a help against this vanity of the mind, breaking forth in idle thoughts and phancies; first, we must take the counsel of *Solomon*, *to keep the heart with all diligence.* The heart is that which must be narrowly looked unto, that evil and unprofitable thoughts rise not up in it.

Here

Here must be the special care to prevent, first breeding and ingendring of sin in the most inward parts.

This Thief will be still filching and stealing time continually, do what one can. Wherefore a watchful and wary eye must be had thereunto, and a diligent guard must be set before the heart, to keep out such imaginations from entring, as be like Rogues and Vagrants, worth nothing, and alwaies come to steal something. When a man makes conscience of his thoughts, and observes them to what end they tend, this will be an excellent help to keep them from wandring; whereas if one will follow the Proverb, and esteem them as free, they will never be kept from a busie fondness, like Ants in a Mole-hill, that run up and down, hither and thither, and do nothing.

Then in the second place, we must labour to be provided beforehand,

hand, of some profitable matter or subject, whereunto to bend the thoughts in solitariness; something that tends to the glory of God, and our own good, either in the matters of the Soul, or the lawful affairs of the body, must be let into the Soul, to take up the room, that the busie Fancies may be the better stopt out. And indeed the Lord hath provided a Christian of good store of such matter, if he be not wanting to himself. For there is nothing that offers it self to any of our senses, which doth not also offer to our mind (if it were not stark blind) some glorious attribute of God to be seen and considered of. So that to want occasion of good thoughts in this variety of matter, is to want light at noon-tide, that proceeds from nothing but from want of eyes. But this is a great help to him, that can see to set his Soul a work first on the good things.

For

For if one have let his heart loose at first, he shall not (without much pains and toyl) catch it again, and have it within command. Thus doing, a great part of vain cogitations shall be cut off.

Now comes to be handled the fifth and worst of all the five consumers of time; which is so much the more dangerous, because it is in some honest reckoning among most men; and is esteemed as the right Lord and true owner of that time, which for the most part it holds by usurpation and injury. This is the immoderate care of the world, and of things of this life, though in themselves honest and lawful, when a man doth wind himself into such a labyrinth and maze of affairs, as he cannot get out at fit times to spiritual and religious duties, at least not to those which are private: when the heart is so surcharged with bargains and purchases, and buying and
selling

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selling, and building, and such like ; that God and goodness, Christ and salvation, Heaven and Hell, come not into a mans mind once in a day, scarce once in a week ; or at least, if they come, they be quickly shut out, and have no long nor quiet entertainment there : when the Soul is overwhelmed with caring, thinking, devising, and striving how to grow great here, and is so tossed in the gulf of earthly matters, that it cannot come to land (as it were) to settle it self in any proportion, to think how it may grow great in Heaven, and how it may get possession of the true treasure. This is a wondrous consumer of good hours, digging them all into the dunghill of this World. Christ finds fault with this in the Parable ; the men bidden to the Feast, had Farms, and Oxen, and Wives, and such matters in hand, (business forsooth of more importance than so) and therefore
could

could not come, *Matth.* 22. And the thorny ground had so much carking and caring how to live, that it doth even choak the Word, the good seed could not grow thereby, *Matth.* 13. And the Lord complains of them of the captivity of *Judah*, *Hag.* 1. 13. that they could find time to build their own houses, yea and to ciele them too; but they said, it was no time to build the house of God: so this sin doth ingross all the time to it self, and will not give elbow-room to any good exercise, especially to any private exercises, without which the publick are but as meat without digestion; and yet it comes like an honest and approveable thing, painted with the name of thriftiness and pains in ones lawful calling. To fence our selves against this ravenous and lurking fault, we must binde our selves to these three rules, which all depend upon the rule of Christ, that bids us *first seek the Kingdom of God,*
first,

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first in time, and first in affection, *Matth. 6. 33.* And again, *lay up your treasure in Heaven. v. 20.* Hence (I say) three rules may be collected, to which he that would not be spoiled of good occasions to the Soul by worldliness, must more and more frame himself and his life.

The first is, that no man suffer himself to enter upon so many businesses, or any so eagerly, as that his ordinary affairs should hinder himself, or his Family from the performance of ordinary Religious exercises.

The common and daily matters of this world, in any mans Calling whatsoever, should not draw him, or his Family, from common and daily duties of Religion; such are reading, praying, meditating, and religious observing of the Sabbath: for here a man must take care for his household, as well as for himself, that he do not hinder them from taking convenient
time

time to pray, and read, &c. by forcing upon them an over-great burden of ordinary businesſes. For if the Soul be to be preferred before the Body, and Heaven before Earth; then thoſe cuſtomable matters that pertain to the ſaving of the Soul, muſt be ſet before, much more ſtand equal with the things that pertain to the Body. Secondly, the extraordinary works of our calling (if any fall out) muſt not barr us from the extraordinary works of Religion. As for example, Harveſt, and Hay-time, or the like, are extraordinary times for the buſineſs for the Body: ſo preparation to the Sacrament, faſting (if need ſo require) and ſuch like, are extraordinary works for the Soul; now as the care of inning ones Corn or Graſs, muſt not keep him from taking time to prepare himſelf to the Sacrament, or to faſt at his need: ſo the receiving of the Lords Supper is matter of more than ordinary uſe
for

for the Soul ; and some needful journey stands in the like manner for the Body , but a man must rather defer his journey (if it may be put off without over-much hinderance to him) than omit the receiving of the Lords Supper. The same rule must be kept in all other particulars. For if the Soul be more worth, and must be more carefully attended on than the body (as it is no reason the Handmaid should take place of the Mistress,) then those things which do after a peculiar manner concern the good and profit thereof, must not be neglected for such as do more specially help the state of the body outwardly. Lastly, if some outward duty of Religion have been put off from the time, wherein it should be performed, by some sudden and unexpected business, that required such haste (as in such case ordinary duties of Religion may be deferred) then some ordinary business of less weight must

must (in recompence) give place to that exercise afterwards, and a man must find time for that, whether it be reading, praying, or meditating, by leaving undone (for that space) something that may be better spared. And thus you have heard what be those special evils which lie in wait to couzen us of our good time, and how they may be prevented. And so the first part is handled; namely, from what Time is to be redeemed.

Now follows to shew, what it is that is to be redeemed, and so you shall fully know wherein this duty consists. Now by Time, the Apostle means two things: First, the very passing away of hours and minutes, the space and leisure of any thing; and Secondly, the good occasions or opportunities that fall out in this space. For the word in the Original, signifies not alone the very sliding of minutes, but the space considered also

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also with some special fitness, that it hath for some good, which we call the season of it. Now for the first, it shall not be needful to say any more, being that every one knows, that every thing must have some space wherein to be done. And he that will avoid the five fore-named evils, shall never want time, or the space wherein to do or get good. But for the occasions and fit opportunities that fall out, now for this, now for that, in this space, it is some more skill to find them out, and make use of them.

Now these seasons are all of two sorts : First, such whereby a man may more easily get some good to himself : Secondly, such, whereby a man may with more fitness and ease do some good. Of the first sort, namely, seasonable opportunities to get good, I will name three particulars which are most needful to be considered, and by proportion of which,

which, any man may come to the knowledge of. other like. The first, when God continues the Gospel, offering daily the Word and Sacrament, and calling to repentance and amendment of life; this is the season of repenting; this is the harvest wherein we may reap Christ, if we be not negligent; this is the acceptable year of the Lord, in which one shall be received, if he return. Whilest Wisdom lifts up her voice; whilest her messengers come daily to invite us; whilest her gates stand open, and her dinner stands ready drest, whilest her message is done unto us: all this time if a man will strive and endeavour to turn from his sin, to leave his folly, and forsake his scorning, he shall be a welcome guest, she will accept him, help him, and give him an encrease of grace, till he become strong with her meats.

Whosoever,

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Whoſoever lives under the preaching of the Goſpel, hath this privilege annexed to the outward teaching, that if he will but ſtrive and pray to God, to give him ſtrength to repent and amend his waies and turn to him, God will (upon his promiſe) hear his prayers and aſſiſt him : but when the Goſpel is gone, then the date is paſt, a man may call and not be heard, and cry and not be regarded. So then every man redeems this ſeaſon of the Goſpel, when he gives himſelf to conſider ſeriouſly of thoſe faults which he finds in himſelf, and hears ſharply reprov'd in the Word, and hereupon reſolves to forſake them, and doth not only his own beſt endeavour, but earneſtly calls upon God for his help, without which his power is but weakneſs and ineffectual; when he doth alſo duly ponder upon the holy Commandments that he hears preached, and thoſe exhortations that are daily founded

founded in his ears to move him to do such duties as God requires, and hereupon concludes with himself to set about this work, and craves the strength of God to bear him through in the same. And when he doth advisedly think of the promises that are generally proclaimed, and labours to get some assurance that he is such a one to whom the right of these promises appertain : thus doing, I say, one redeems the time wisely, and makes his advantage of the Gospel while it continues, which is a thing that all men should do : but so rare in the world, as that it is wonder the Lord hath so patiently continued his loving voice, when men scoff at it and will not hear. The Lord hath and doth send his Prophets amongst us, as he did among the Jews, rising up early, and sending them, which with all earnestness do proclaim the dangerous event that shall follow upon prophaneness, neglect,

lect, and contempt of Gods word, breaking of his Sabbath, rayling, wrathfulness, whoredom, wantonness, covetousness, thieving, oppressing, flandering, lying, and such like: yet how many run on in these evils presumptuously, rushing like the horse into the battle, with an unreasonable boldness, Not fearing any danger, and shutting their ears against these reproofs, as the deaf-Adder doth, that they may not be moved by them to amendment: ah, how contrary is this to redeeming the time? If any man have hitherto lost the season, let him now grow wise, and even at this time turn to God, and beg power to forsake these sins. How often and how earnestly are men exhorted to all good works by the continual voice of God, speaking unto them by his servants? to read the word of God daily; to pray privately; to meditate upon the Word, to watch over their dayes;
and

and to call themselves to a reckoning every day for the faults committed in the day; yet who regards this voice? who marks these exhortations? where is one, that hath enjoyned himself to some constancy in praying, reading, and the fore-named duties? This is to sleep in harvest, a most foolish practice and unwise; wherefore whilest there is yet a little time left, whilest we have the light, let us walk in it, that we be not overtaken with darknes. He that hath not yet begun, let him be sorry that he hath put it off so late, and now set foot into these wayes of God, whilest God sets out his Word as a candle to direct him, and as his hand to lead him by. The promises of God are in like sort published amongst us. Happiness is held up as a reward of all true hearted Christians, and the crown of life is proposed to those, which are sound and faithful members of Jesus Christ. And yet

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yet as though all were sure to get it, or it were not worth seeking by any, the most men flatter themselves in their sins, and will needs promise these good things to themselves, when they have no assurance or proof out of Gods word, whereby to lay claim or title to them. This is a grievous and a dangerous neglecting of time. And if any have not yet made sure work this way, let him even now set about it, whilst the Word as a touch-stone is before him, by which he may try himself, and which will make him such a one as he should be, if he will strive to follow it, and pray for ability to be ruled by it. So then whilst God holds out his benefits, and stands with his arms open to accept us, let us take his benefits, and be perswaded to come unto him in good earnest; let it be too late to travel when midnight shall come, instead of noon day. This is the first and chiefest opportunity

opportunity of getting good: namely, to joyn with the Gospel, and follow it with our endeavours and prayers, by which it shall be made effectual unto us.

The second opportunity of getting good, is in time of youth and health, whilst the vigour and strength of the body and mind is fit for labour, and capable of instruction. And Solomon in his book of Penance, *viz.* Ecclesiastes, bids, *Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth, before the evil days come.* These days of youth and health are good days, when he which will use them, hath his memory stedfast to call to mind his evil ways that he may bewail them, and to treasure up good instructions and promises that may guide and comfort him, when the limbs will joyn with the mind, and the mind hath the body as a fit instrument to seek the Kingdom of Heaven, if a man will address him-

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self unto it:but the days of old age and sickness fail much of the commodious fitness for good; the memory is cracked, the head and understanding is weak, and especially the time of sickness is so filled with pain, so shaken with distractions, and incumbred with griefs and sorrows, that one is nothing fit to repent, or pray, or hear, or to do any such thing.

Now when a man in the prime of his days, and in the fulness of his health, will give himself to seek heaven, will hear the Word, and meditate upon it, and apply it to himself, will confess his sins, and force himself to bewail them; will pray to God for good things, and set the whole course of his life in a right frame; he hath well taken opportunity, and he shall have rest in his latter days, much quiet and contentment, at least much strength and assistance in his sickness, because he hath something
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in store against the time of want.

But alas, how do the common sort of men bewray their monstrous folly in this behalf? What more common than that sottish and brutish speech, at least such ignorant and profane thoughts, men will repent when they be old, and cry God mercy when they feel themselves sick, and amend all when they be ready to go out of the world? and foolish man, thou knowest not whether thou shalt die suddenly, whether thou shalt have thy wits and senses, or whether thou shalt have power of heart to make the least colour of repentance in those extremities. How many have died suddenly? how many sottishly? and yet how do men, for all these warnings, defer the best business, namely, the work of repentance and turning to God, (which will require the whole strength of the soul) to the worst

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and most crasie time of sickness or old age? As if a prisoner, at what time a man was offering him a pardon, and calling upon him to take it, some good space before the Assizes, should say, Nay, let me alone, I will not look after my pardon, till immediately before I am to come before the Judge: this were a most fond part, especially if it were so, that the thief knew not whether the next day should be the day of his arraignment or no; so the case stands betwixt the Lord and us. If any man therefore hath been so little careful of his own eternal good, as to put off repentance and conversion till that dead time, or doth foster any such harmful conceit in his heart, let him now cast it out, and now that he hath his health and strength, upon better deliberation take in hand this work.

Be not so extremely mad, as to give more time to the devil than to God,
especially

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especially to give the principal time. He were a foolish traveller, that would willingly gallop all the day quite contrary to his way, and being told of it, would answer, When it draws towards Sun-set, I will turn into the right way. Why be men thus blockish for their souls, that knowing themselves to be out of the way of life, will yet of purpose defer to set their feet into the right path, till sickness of age, when the Sun of their life is at the point of setting? Ah, let our Proverb teach us more wit, *Make hay while the Sun shines.* Turn, turn, whilst thou hast health and strength, use all to get repentance and salvation.

The last chief opportunity of getting good, is, when a man hath company, and is in the society of some godly wise man, able to give sound counsel and direction, able to answer all doubts, objections, and scruples of ones mind, now there is

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a fit opportunity to grow in wisdom, to be resolved of all doubts, and to seek direction.

So then, a man ought not to suffer bashfulness, or other foolish matters to put by that good communication, whereby he might enrich his soul. It is a special favour of God, that any man can come where his servants are that have excellent gifts; and he doth deprive himself of much good, that will not seek to benefit himself by them. When the Woman of *Samarita* perceived Christ to be a Prophet, she proposed her doubt unto him, albeit he was a stranger. When *John Baptist* might become to, the publicans and sinners came and asked what they should do. Whilst the Jayler had *Paul* in his keeping, he came to ask that needful question, *What shall I do to be saved?* So if there be any man whose heart is perplexed with some doubt, or over-burdened with some tempta-

temptation, or over-master'd by some sin, it is a part of good discretion for such a one to go and seek the advice of some able Christian or wise man, before that either himself be too far gone, or he want the opportunity of such a counsellor or helper. These be three special occasions of obtaining good to a man's own soul from things without him: In all which, to take the time is a most commendable point of wisdom, but to be negligent, is such folly as *Solomon* reproveth, when he saith, *That a fool hath a price in his hand to get wisdom, but he wants a heart.* Oh that men would beware of this heartlessness, and take heed of losing their price, by which they might get wisdom. Now come to speak of the occasions of doing good, and these are either in others, or in themselves. First, in others, and that for their soul and body. Sometimes a man shall find a kind of tractable-

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ness in those with whom he hath to deal, that their ears stand open, and they are ready to drink in an exhortation or reproof, by reason of some affliction that is upon them, or some need they have of our help, or such like occasion. Here is time for a kind and sound admonition, then a man ought in all love, and yet with all plainness, to follow the occasion; *striking* (as our proverb is) *whilst the iron is hot*, speaking when he sees him in the melting vein, ready to take all well, and in good part. And so *Elihu* notes, that when a man is brought to his death-bed, and to abhor all worldly delights, then his ears are bored, and then there is work for an interpreter: before the bones clattered, and the mourners looked for the funeral, an interpreter was despised, but now his words are observed. Thus a man may do much good to his neighbours or servants soul; if he wait for a time when he

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is fit to receive admonition, and then gives him it; as the husbandman in dry weather waits for a shower of rain, and then sets in his plow. Again, for the body, sometimes one shall meet with one that hath true need, that is in distress for his bodily estate, and doth indeed want relief; this is an occasion and fit time to shew liberality, now a man must open his purse, and be ready to give freely; I mean not, that every time a man meets a beggar, he should be giving, (for to those a man should not give, but in the very extremity of necessity) but if our brother hath been afflicted by any loss through fire, or such like, (that he do not make himself needy by idleness, but it comes upon him by some hand of God) here is an object fit for mercy, and here one may be seasonably liberal; here is an Altar, offer the sacrifice of alms upon it, which is a thing wherewith God is well pleased.

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pleased. Some other time sparing may be more fit, but now is a season to be more free of gift, and openhanded.

There is an occasion of doing good offered in others, wherein I have named these two particulars, that every man might accordingly take notice of other like. Then, there is also occasion of doing offered in ones self, whether by some outward thing that befalls him, or by some inward stirring of the mind and affections: as outwardly when a time comes in, wherein we have received some more special benefit; this should provoke us to more thankfulness by remembrance of the benefit.

Thus this time of Christ's Nativity should (if any way) be celebrated, that it might turn to an occasion of more hearty thanksgiving, and more true obedience unto Christ, that
gave

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gave himself for our sins, and took our nature upon him, that in it he might bear our iniquities. So when we be in the enjoying of Gods Creatures, whilst we be eating and drinking, or such like, here is a special season to lift up the heart to God, and to kindle a flame of praise by this fuel, that our thanks might be so much the more earnest, by how much we have a more present feeling of Gods mercy, and do even taste how good he is.

On the other side, a man is sometimes pressed with a sore cross and affliction that pincheth his Soul, here is a very fit occasion of humbling ones self, and examining ones heart: for in these afflictions God calls to humiliation for the most part, which duty being performed, after, a man may rejoyce in his afflictions, but whilst the burthen of the cross is heavy, here is a notable means to
further

further one in the work of humiliation ; and if one can take the time when God smites , he may (at least he ought) cause his heart to stoop before him with more ease , than when he was at more ease for his body. Again , sometimes a man hath a more inward stirring of his affections , which he cannot have at another time ; this must be followed , greedily taken , sometimes at the Sermon , or upon some other occasion , a man hearing or thinking of his sin , and the punishment due thereunto , having a kind of pricking in his heart , and some touch of remorse within him , his conscience begins to tell him that all is not well , and he grows to some orderly conclusion ; sure I will now be sorry for this fault , and amend it : now if one will follow this motion , and go after God when he calls (for this is one of his inward callings)
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and not shoulder it out with fond mirth, but nourish it by a plain confession of his sin to God, and an hearty begging of grace and strength from him, to do that which he now sees he should do; this will come to godly sorrow, and so to repentance: but else if he choak it and quench it, it will vanish, and the heart will be more hard frozen in the dregs of sin. So that if there be any, whose heart at this time at the speaking of these words, whose Soul smites him for his swearing, lying, Sabbath-breaking, whoredom, drunkenness, gaming, covetousness, railing, or the like sin; let him when he is gone out of the Church, cast himself down in the presence of God confess this is his sin or sins freely, without dissembling; labour to be more sorrowful for them than ever he was, and pray to God to pull him out of this mire. This if he do,
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he shall take the time, he shall be a Convert, the Lord will receive him, as the unthrifty Prodigal Son was received, and by redeeming the time he shall find redemption to his soul. But if he despise this admonition of God, his soul shall be more seared than before, his heart shall be delivered to a greater hardness and senselessness than ever before, and so be further off from repentance and life.

But alas, the frantick dealing of men in this case is too palpable, and to be wondred at, when Gods word strikes upon them, when they feel the keenness of it, when the threatenings have cut, so that they smart for it; then they run to dicing, carding, drinking, dancing, &c. as it were of set purpose to drive away the Spirit of God, that was coming towards them to heal their Soul. None is so mad to take such courses
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for his body, that when he feels the
fore to smart, then to run from the
Physician, and cover it over with a
clout, or strive to forget it: yet for
their Souls a number deal so senselessly
in this thing as much as in any other,
verifying that name which the Ho-
ly Ghost hath given unto them, when
he terms them mad men: for it is
a property peculiar to a mad man,
that feeling pain, he will hate the
Physician, and run away from him
that would help. Oh that those of
us which have hitherto been so mad,
would return now to their minds,
and to God to be healed! Again,
sometimes a mans heart is stirred up
with an inward and secret rejoycing
or gladness. Then saith Saint James,
*If any man be merry, let him sing
Psalms*, Jam. 5. 13. now he shall do
it with a chearful courage indeed;
and therefore David would in such
a case rise at midnight to sing a
Psalm

Psalm, rather than he would lose the season, when it would relish with him so well.

Sometimes also a man or woman shall feel a secret pensiveness growing over his heart, so that it even melts, as the ground that thaws after a frost, and he could even weep abundantly, tears offer themselves in a full measure. Here is an excellent occasion of renewing ones repentance. Now whatever be ones company, whatever be the matter in hand, except it be of absolute necessity, let him leave it off, and betake him to his Chamber or some secret place, let him fall on his knees; now let him open his mouth, and acknowledge his sins against himself, giving vent to his grief, and turning all to godly sorrow, whatsoever the occasion was at first. Thus if any body do, his repentance shall receive a notable increase: but if he pass it over, his heart

heart will not answer his desire another time. Further more, sometimes a mans heart is earnestly moved with some hungry desire to enjoy some grace of God, and great longing after some Christian vertue: Now let him in the heat and flame of his desire address himself to prayer; then one shall send up such piercing cries, and give such a loud knock against the gates of Christs mercy, that he cannot choose but hear, and send one back with an Alms, as it were; thus he redeems the time: But else his desires will be so cold and chill at another time, that he shall scarce thrust a Petition out of his lips, and then these drop down at his feet, and do him little good. And thus in every other (through the turning of our affections) we must follow Gods Spirit, yea, or nature when it leads us, wisely turning all to spiritual uses. And thus you may perceive

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perceive what it is to redeem the time , and how it may be attained. Now let us come to some brief Application of the Point.

Use. First , this Point thus explained , meets with a number of imperfections even in the best , and him that is most careful of his ways ; of which we are now to take notice , and purpose amendment , if we have not hitherto considered of them. For this is a fault to which a man (even in a good measure spiritual) is subject , for want of redeeming the time , that he comes to that lazy pass now and then , as he hath nothing to do , nothing whereabout to settle himself. It is a carnal unsettledness in a Christian to be so negligent of his time , as that he should have any minute of time , which he knows not how to bestow upon some good
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and profitable use. The Lord offers such a multitude of occasions to do and receive good, that if we could with wisdom take them, there is no hour passeth us, in which we might not do or get some good. And if there be nothing else, yet this is something whereabout he hath good occasion to be busied, even to fall out with himself, because he hath nothing (I mean, he sees nothing that he hath to do.) Sometimes, if men see their servants standing idle and unbusied, they can ask them with a kind of indignation, What, can you find nothing to do? And sure the Lord might come with this question divers times to us, and say, as it is in this Parable. *Why stand you all the day idle?* asking whether the World were so empty of occasions, and our selves so perfectly well, as that we can find nothing to do? But there is no
hour

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hour passeth us, which we should not find fit for some good thing, if we could catch the opportunity before it be turned, and did not harm our selves for want of diligent redeeming the time.

Yet there are other faults, of which Christians are to be warned: as to begin with the last first. How many be there that are so stuffed with worldly businessses, and yet are greedy of more, as that they cannot find leisure one hour in a day, nay, scarce in a week, to bestow upon reading, praying, meditating or conferring? Yea, as though time were made for nothing but to seek wealth and transitory things, so it is the chiefest of their care. It appears that such labour not for conscience, but for gain, because they cannot break off ordinary labours so long, as well to perform ordinary duties of Religion. Many may say (with grief enough if they

they did well) that their hands are so full of the world , as that they can scarce through the week , take the Bible into their hands to read any thing therein , unless perhaps it be in the Church at some publick meeting. Thus , men which are born to a better inheritance , are content to wear out themselves in the earth , as if they were to perish in the earth with other baser creatures. Here is one fault to be amended then : let no Christian bestow so much time in the world , as that he cannot find sufficient to seek Heaven and the things thereof. Then for the matter of sports , methings some Christians should even shrink , before the word of reproof comes to them , when they may think of so many hours spent such a day at bowls ; so many (it may be) the next day in shooting ; so many the third day in shovel-board , or the like exercises : haply in themselves

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selves not unlawful, and when they come to reckoning for religious exercises, the count comes in very slowly, but the minutes or quarters, some half quarter of an hour, or thereabouts bestowed such a day in praying alone, and some three or four days after, about a quarter of an hour in reading; and (it may be) the next week, some half quarter more in meditation: and thus if the expences of time were written in our debt-books, as they be in Gods; we might even blush to read so many *Items* for pleasure and sport, and scarce one or two in a side for private religious exercises. Then for our words: may we not hang down our heads with shame, to think that God made our tongues, and we speak scarce one word in an hundred to his glory? Idle words, even many of those whom we are to regard as Christians, count them no faults, neither

ther come to repent for them ; it was but a word out of the way , say they. But this power to speak (being a gift peculiar to men above all beasts) ought to be more preciouslly regarded , than that it should be abused for base trifles. Then for idle thoughts ; who makes question of them almost ? Alas we do not remember that God hath searching eyes and fierce , which pierce into the depth of ones soul. We dream that thoughts are not so much , and spare our selves in our unthriftiness , when we should deal more religiously with our selves. Lastly , some might be reproved for too long lying in bed , and spending more hours in slugging or sleeping , than health and strength doth require : many perhaps will think that it is left to their own pleasure , and that the Preacher is too busie , if he take upon him to teach them

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them when to rise, as though it were no fault to over-sleep themselves. Indeed some old and sickly mens bodies must take it when they may; but for the greatest part of men, if they knew what good the first half hour of the early morning spent in religious exercises would bring them, they would not love sleep so well, as for it to neglect them. It is well said, *He that seeks me early, shall find me*, and it well may be literally understood. Therefore (brethren) there is none but may see a fault in himself in these respects some or all of them, and happy is he that resolves to mend it. Therefore if you will take good counsel, do thus when you come home. Think, alas, if time must be reckoned for, and should be redeemed, how far am I behind hand with God, that (what for sleep, what for play, what for idle babling, what for vain thoughts, and excessive

five worldliness) I cannot make a good account of the fortieth, yea, of the hundredth part of my time? And then grieve because thou hast been such an unthrifit of time, and now begin carefully to spare before all be gone. But now here is a reproof more sharp for some others, that are not willing to hear of that ear. Tell them they must not spend a whole day, or a whole night in playing and sporting. What not at *Christmas*? (say they) why, you are too precise: well, but yet vouchsafe to consider a little what God speaks. Thou sayest this is too much preciseness, and so saith the world; but the Apostle bids to walk precisely or warily, redeeming the time: and he that will take time to card or dice, and to use lawful recreations immoderately (I mean so, as to be at his play the greater part of the day, and it may be some, if not the most of the night too) shall pay full dearly

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for it : either he must repent , and undo this with much grief and sorrow of heart , or else he must smart for it hereafter worse in Hell. I would not deal over sharply with thee : but take Gods loving admonition , and let him have one tenth part of the four and twenty hours : yea , more a good deal than so , now that thou hast more leisure than ordinary. And here is yet a kind of people that are to be rigorously handled , such as are all gamblers , that spend no one hour waking, but upon pleasure : the world calls them scatter-goods , and the Lord will call them scatter-hours , that do mispend both goods and hours. Such (let them think of themselves how they will) as do make gaming the greatest part (if not all) of their occupation , must be content to hear that they have no portion in Heaven , as they can keep no portion in earth. How can one have treasure in Heaven , that never
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laid up any there? If God hate a gamester, so that he will not give him good clothes to his back, (now he hath threatened that he shall be clothed with rags) he will much less afford him a seat in Heaven. And howsoever for a time they ruffle it out, and be clad better than their more laborious neighbours, yet this trade will surely undo them, for they have brought this peril upon themselves, that either God must not be true, or they must not be rich, he must forfeit his truth, or they their goods, besides their name and soul: wherefore let such as have hitherto given their days to such an un sanctified and inordinate course, surcease from the practice of their lewdness; and both in conscience for their souls sake, & in discretion for their goods sake, resolve to become better husbands of time, lest their gaming on earth, bring beggary to their latter days, and damnation to their souls

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for ever. Lastly, Let all good Christians be admonished to make precious account of their time, and with much carefulness to take the seasons and opportunities of God, according as they have heard it is their duty. Christians either indeed purpose to learn, or make a shew of such a purpose when they come to Church. Ah, that we might all learn this thrift, and practise it as we have heard: begin to day, and hold on still. Now is a time of remembering the most admirable work of Christs incarnation, when he was made flesh of the Virgin to purge us from sin, and save us from wrath by the shedding of his blood, and sufferings which he endured in his flesh. Give not all (ah, why should we give any of it?) this time to play, chiefly to bezing, sursetting or wantonness, but take some space to consider of the greatness of this benefit, and to be thankful proportionably thereunto.

I would I might hope to prevail with any by this exhortation : but howsoever, it is needful to be spoken, that none may have occasion to pretend ignorance. You see or might see your duties in this behalf ; and in practising the same shall find the benefit of it. But fools will scorn admonition, and those that have accustomed themselves to lust, will not be entreated to pull their necks from out their hard yoke, and to serve a better Master ; nay, so foolish are a number, that they think to do Christ great honour in spending the day whereon they imagine that he was born, and some few that follow it, in more than ordinary riot and sinful excess ; as though he were a God that loved iniquity, and were delighted with drinking, and swilling, and gaming, and swearing, and surfetting, and all disorder : but those that know Christ, know full well that

he is not pleased with such pranks. Wherefore if we will spend a day to Christ, spend it more religiously and soberly than all other days, not more prophanely and luxuriously. We should neither forget his birth; but when we observe some special time of remembring it, shew that we remember his goodness by doing good, more honour to his name, not by committing more rebellion against him. And to conclude, as at this time so at all times, let all men that would have their souls well furnished with inward substance, play the good husbands in taking time and opportunity. Whensoever we find any fit occasion of getting or doing good in our selves or others, let it not slip, but lay hold upon it, and use it. It is joyful to think (if we could think of it seriously) what commodity this thrift would bring; how much knowledge and godliness might he get,
that

that would keep his tongue and heart carefully to good matters? What a large treasure of good works might he have, that would be ready whensoever his neighbours necessity called for help, to stretch out his hand for his relief? And when he saw him fit for an admonition, would wisely bestow it upon him? How full of grace should his old age and sickness be, that would give his health to God, and his first years to the service of his soul? How great acquaintance might he get in the palace of Wisdom, that would come to her at her first call, and enter so soon as the doors were set open? How many sins might a man leave, and how much power should he get over all sin, that (when his heart smites him) would turn to God by prayer and confession? What great grace would affliction bring, if a man would settle himself to humiliation

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liation, and gage his heart in time of affliction? How much thankfulness might he have, that would lift up his heart to God in the fruition of blessing? How many fervent prayers might he store up in heaven that would not fore-slow time, when he feels his desires earnest? how comfortably might he weep over Christ, and how plentifully, that would take the tide of tears, and turn all pensiveness to this use? and how many sweet and chearful Psalms might a Christian sing, if he would turn all his mirth into a Psalm; and offer it up to God? O what a large encrease of grace would this care bring? how should his soul thrive, that would be thus husbandly? Surely as the common speech hath commended a little land well tilled, before much more ground that is carelessly dressed; so the weaker means with this care, would be more available to enrich the heart, than are the strongest with-

without it. It is not the greatness of ones living that makes one rich; but the good employing and wary husbanding of it: so it is not the greatness of the means, but the diligent redeeming of time, to make use of the means, that makes the soul wealthy. But if great means joyn with great care, the encrease will be so much the more large, as a large living with good husbandry. But alas, hence comes it, that some in the store of all good means of salvation, are very beggars and bankrupts, because of their negligence to take the time and fit season. They let pass all good opportunities, and care not for any occasion for the soul, and how can their soul thrive? Wherefore let every true-hearted Christian learn this wisdom, and practise it, as ever he desires to store his soul with that wealth, which will make him glorious in the eyes

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